

Brookline Preservation Commission

Demolition Application Report

Address: 31 Stetson Street #2
Applicant: Barath Sankaran
Building Type: House (Partial)
National Register Listing (if Applicable): N/A



Historical/Architectural Significance:

The two-family residence at 31 Stetson Street was constructed between 1914 and 1915. P.J. McBreen is listed on the building permit as the owner, and Chas. L. Patriquin as the builder. Charles K.B. Nevin is listed as the architect. The property was sold during construction to W.H. Newcombe, a developer. The first owners were James and Elizabeth McDuff who also owned 23 Stetson, residing there with their three daughters and using 31 Stetson as a rental property.

The area between Babcock Street and Pleasant Street was in the process of development by 1874. Stetson Street was laid out by 1893 on land formerly owned by the Wilson & Sawyer Trust. Subdivision of lots on the street began at that time; the lot for 31 Stetson was created by 1900. Lots on the east side of the street were developed between 1813 and 1819, resulting in a very cohesive neighborhood of 2 ½ story residences which remains largely intact today.

The 2 ½ story Craftsman style house rises from a concrete foundation to a hipped roof with asphalt shingles, wide eaves and exposed rafters. Dormers occupy the center of the left, right and front roof slope. The exterior is clad in stucco and all windows appear to have been replaced. In 1953 the 2 family home was converted to a 3-family. Though a permit could not be located, it is possible that the large rectangular addition to the rear of the property dates from this time.

The house at 31 Stetson Street meets the following criteria for an initial determination of significance:

- c. The building is associated with one or more significant historic persons or events, or with the broad architectural, cultural, political, economic, or social history of the town or Commonwealth; and
- d. The building is historically or architecturally significant in terms of its period, style, method of construction, or its association with a significant architect or builder, either by itself or as part of a group of buildings.

The building at 31 Stetson Street retains integrity of location, design, setting, feeling, materials, and workmanship.

At the hearing on May 13th, 2020 the Commission voted to uphold the initial determination of significance for 31 Stetson Street, imposing a 12 month demolition stay. The applicant has submitted a request to lift the stay based on plans for an addition to the third floor. This addition requires a substantial reconfiguration of the main body of the roof, leaving the dormers in place while raising the main roof line to accommodate additional living space on the third floor. The existing hip roofline will be broken by a knee wall on three sides; a new, shallower pitched roof installed above matching the height of the existing dormer eaves. This new roofline will be hip at the front, terminating in two sheds above a gable to the rear. The hip roofs of the existing dormers will be modified as well, converted to gables to create space for new, taller windows. A new dormer will be placed to the rear of the right elevation (construction to match the existing, modified dormers) and the hip roof on the existing addition to the rear will be modified to a mansard roof, creating a roof deck at the third floor. A new doorway at the center of the gable will allow access to the roof deck. Four skylights will be added to the new roof.

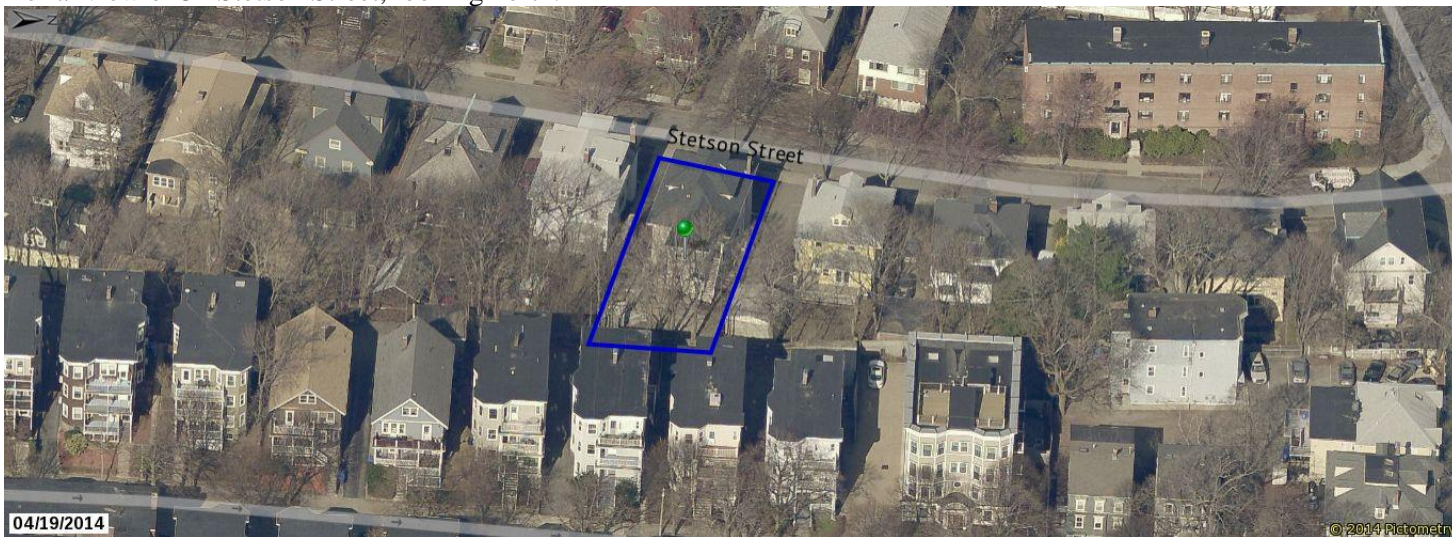
At the hearing on July 14th, the Commission expressed support for the idea behind the addition, continuing the case to a subcommittee to work out the details. On July 23rd the subcommittee met and reviewed revised plans, voting to send the proposal back to the full Commission for review. The new plans simplify the rooflines of the dormers.



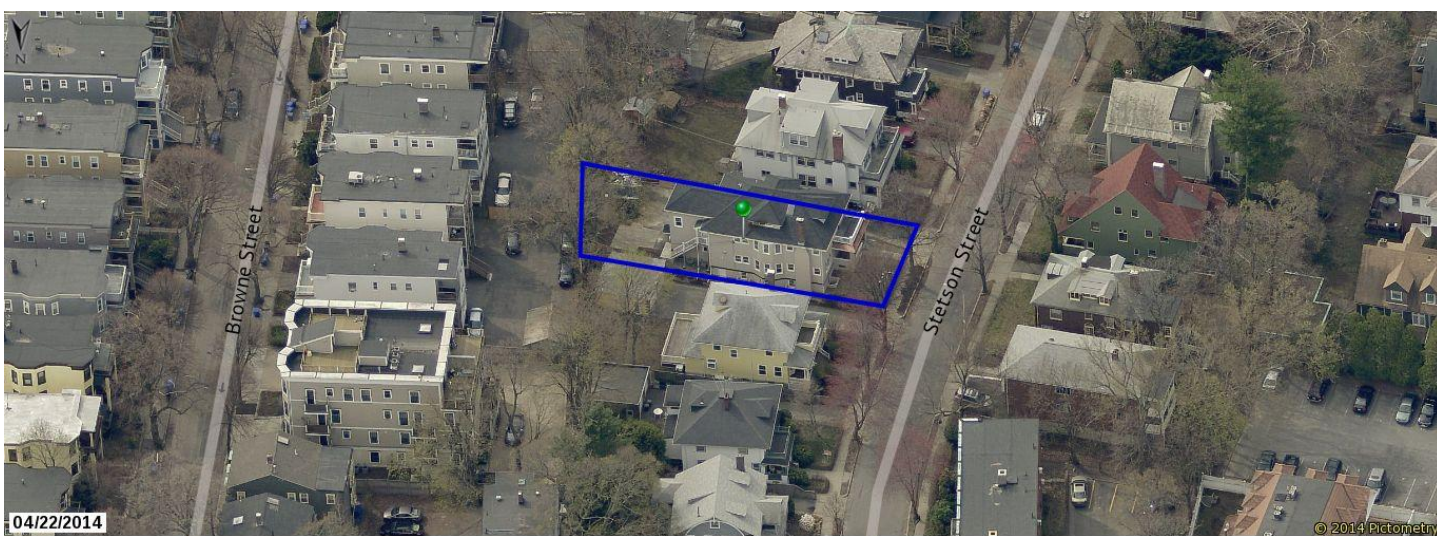
Aerial view of 31 Stetson Street, looking east.



Aerial view of 31 Stetson Street, looking north.



Aerial view of 31 Stetson Street, looking west.



Aerial view of 31 Stetson Street, looking south.



1919 G.W. Bromley Town of Brookline Atlas



Façade, 31 Stetson Street.





Views of the rear addition.



Views of front and right side dormer from Stetson Street.





Left side dormer, view from Stetson Street.

Streetscape, 31 Stetson 2nd house from right.

